

Message Text

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43

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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5398

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0944

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, SF

SUBJ: EIGHT REPORTED DEAD IN PORT ELIZABETH RIOTS; UWC REACTOR

THREATENS TO CLOSE UNIVERSITY

REF: CAPE TOWN 0930

SUMMARY: PRESS REPORTS INDICATE EIGHT BLACKS KILLED AND 20 WOUNDED BY POLICE GUNFIRE IN AUGUST 18 RIOTING AND ARSON IN BLACK TOWNSHIPS OF EASTER CAPE CITY OF PORT ELIZABETH. SCHOOLS IN BLACK TOWNSHIP IN EAST LONDON CLOSED FOLLOWING THIRD DAY OF MARCHES AND DEMONSTRATIONS THRE. AT (COLORED) UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE (UWC) IN CAPE TOWN, REACTOR HAS THREATENED TO CLOSE UNIVERSITY IF DISRUPTION CONTINUES. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING SEVERAL DAYS OF DEMONSTRATIONS, MARCHES AND BOYCOTTS BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN BLACK TOWNSHIPS IN PORT ELIZABETH, RIOTING AND ARSON ERUPTED AUGUST 18 LEAVING EIGHT DEAD, TWENTY WOUNDED, AND TWENT UNDER ARREST. ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, EVENTS BEGAN WITH MARCH BY SOME 200 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, GROWING EVENTUALLY TO CROWD OF OVER 1,000 WHICH WAS CONFRONTED BY POLICE FIRING TEAR GAS. CROWD BEGAN STONING POLICE AND PASSING VEHICLES AND BURNING BUILDINGS. EIGHT BUILDINGS

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INCLUDING A BANK, POST OFFICE AND BANTU ADMINISTRATION

AFFAIRS BOARD (BAAB) OFFICE WERE DESTROYED. DAMAGE ESTIMATED AT 600,000 RAND BY BAAB OFFICIALS. ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, BY MID AFTERNOON BAAB DIRECTOR AHD ORDERED ALL CLERICAL STAFF IN TOWNSHIPS TO VACATE THEIR OFFICES. ONE BAAB OFFICIAL AND ONE RAILWAY POLICEMAN REPORTEDLY INJURED IN STONE-THROWING INCIDENTS.

2. IN EAST LONDON, DEMONSTRATION BY SOME 300 SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS REPORTEDLY BORKEN UP BY RIOT POLICE. THIS WAS THIRD DAY OF DEMONSTRATIONS BY STUDENTS IN EAST LONDON. PRESS REPORTS THAT CISKEI EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS ORDERED CLOSURE UNTIL AUG. 23 OF ALL POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE TOWNSHIP, AFFECTING SOME 4,150 STUDENTS.

3. IN CAPE TOWN, BLACK TOWNSHIPS APPEAR TO BE RETURNING TO SOME SEMBLANCE OF NORMAL ROUTINE WITH BUS SERVICE RESTORED AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SAID TO RANGE FROM 70 TO 90 PERCENT. HOWEVER (COLORED) UWC CONTINUES TO BE SCENE OF STUDENT UNREST. ALTHOUGH UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS' WORST FEARS OF VIOLENT STUDENT-POLICE CONFRONTATION LAST WEEKEND (REFTEL) WERE AVOIDED, THERE WERE INCIDENTS EARLIER THIS WEEK AS POLICE ORDERED DISPERSAL OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATING OUTSIDE BELLVILLE COURT WHERE STUDENTS ARRESTED EARLIER WERE BEING ARRAINGED. ON AUGUST 17 UWC REACTOR R.H. VAN DER ROSS IN SPEECH TO CAPE TOWN PRESS CLUB CALLED FOR OPENING UWC AND OTHER "BLACK" UNIVERSITIES TO ALL RACES AND TO ABANDON VALUES BASED ON COLOR OF ONE'S SKIN. VAN DER ROSS SAID GRIEVANCES OF UWC STUDENTS REFLECTED GRIEVANCES OF ENTIRE "BLAC" COMMUNITY IN S.A. AND THAT ACTION OF POLICE IN RECENT UNREST WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN NECESSARY IF CONDITIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA SOCIETY WHICH CAUSED STUDENT ACTIONS HAD BEEN PUT RIGHT. CALLING ON GOVERNMENT TO TAKE POSITIVE STEPS TO GIVE ALL PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA FULL CITIZENSHIP, AND TO ASSURE STUDENTS THAT NECESSARY CHANGES IN SOCIETY WERE ON THE WAY, VAN DER ROSS SAID IN HIS LIFETIME HE HAD "ONLY SUCCEEDED IN LOSING THE VOTE" AND HE REFUSED TO BE PARTY TO "DELUDING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR SAKE OF DEFUSING CRISES" UNLESS HE COULD OFFER MEANINGFUL ASSURANCE OF CHANGE.

4. DESPITE SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED BY REACTOR, ON AUGUST 18, GROUP OF STUDENTS BEGAN DISRUPTING CLASSES BY TURNING FIRE
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HOSES ON LECTURERS AND STUDENTS, LEADING TO A FIGHT IN WHICH A LECTURER WAS ATTACED AND A STUDENT WHO INTERVENED WAS INJURED. AT NOON A LETTER FROM THE RECTOR WAS DISTRIBUTED ANNOUNCING EXPULSION OF A STUDENT, ONE GARNETT GODDEN, SAID TO HAVE MADE AN EARLY MORNING TELEPHONE CALL TO VAN DER ROSS IN WHICH THE RECTOR WAS THREATENED WITH VIOLENCE. IN AFTERNOON A STUDENT MEETING, HELD WITHOUT RECTOR'S CONSENT AND REPORTED BY PRESS TO HAVE NUMBERED OVER 900, PASSED

MOTIONS DISAVOWING VIOLENCE, DEPLORING EXPULSION OF GODDEN
AND CALLING FOR CONTINUED BOYCOTT OF CLASSES. INFORMED OF
RESOLUTION, VAN DER ROSS ISSUED STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD CLOSE
UNIVERSITY AT NEXT OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE. STUDENTS RESOLVED
TO MEET ON CAMPUS MORING OF AUGUST 19 FOR "MEMORIAL SERVICE"
FOR ARRESTED COLLEAGUES.
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